

January 20, 2010

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

California Department of Transportation
Highway 175 – Storm Damage Repair Project
WDID No. 1B09016WNME

Mendocino County

On February 9, 2009, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application and \$2,477.00 fee from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Highway 175 Storm Damage Repair Project (project). Additional project information was received on October 20, 2009 and December 29, 2009. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with ephemeral tributaries to McDowell Creek located within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit (HU) No.114.00 (Ukiah Valley Hydrologic Sub-Area 114.31).

The proposed project includes five locations along Highway 175 at post miles (PM) 5.90, PM 6.48, and PM 9.25/9.40 in Mendocino County. In addition, there are two locations at PM 0.20 and PM 0.80 in Lake County; however, these locations have been determined not to be jurisdictional waters of the State. The purposes and objectives of the project are to repair and replace highway fill slopes and culverts to protect the roadway from erosion-related structural failures. The proposed construction activities will consist of: replacing culverts; installing a new drop inlet vault; grading drainage ditches; installing underdrains; replacing culverts; extending outlet down-drains; replacing asphalt and road base; installing a geosynthetic-reinforced embankment; installing rock slope protection (RSP); and conducting slope revegetation and erosion control. The proposed work will result in 520 feet² (260 linear feet) of temporary impacts to ephemeral tributaries to McDowell Creek located at PM 5.90 and PM 9.25. All areas where soil is disturbed will be stabilized with appropriate erosion control, and subsequent to the completion of the project the disturbed soil areas will be revegetated.

The majority of the project impacts are associated with existing culverts, roadside ditches and the installation of RSP. The proposed project will only result in approximately 358 feet² (179 linear feet) of new permanent impacts to waters of the U.S and waters of the State. However, the permanent impacts are associated with the installation of a roadside underdrain, culvert upgrade, and RSP in an unstable drainage ditch, which are ultimately designed to reduce the amount of sediment and improve water quality. Caltrans will utilize BMPs for all activities for stream work, proper erosion and sediment control, and pollution prevention during construction. The proposed project activity is scheduled to be conducted during the summer of 2012. In addition, all project activities will only be performed during the dry weather months between May 15 and October 15.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to perform the project under their Nationwide Permit No. 3 (maintenance) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. In addition, Caltrans has applied to the California Department of Fish and Game for a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement. Caltrans has determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (Class 1 Categorical Exemption). In addition, Regional Water Board staff also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1 Categorical Exemption) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or jpuget@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road construction activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The related documents and comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.